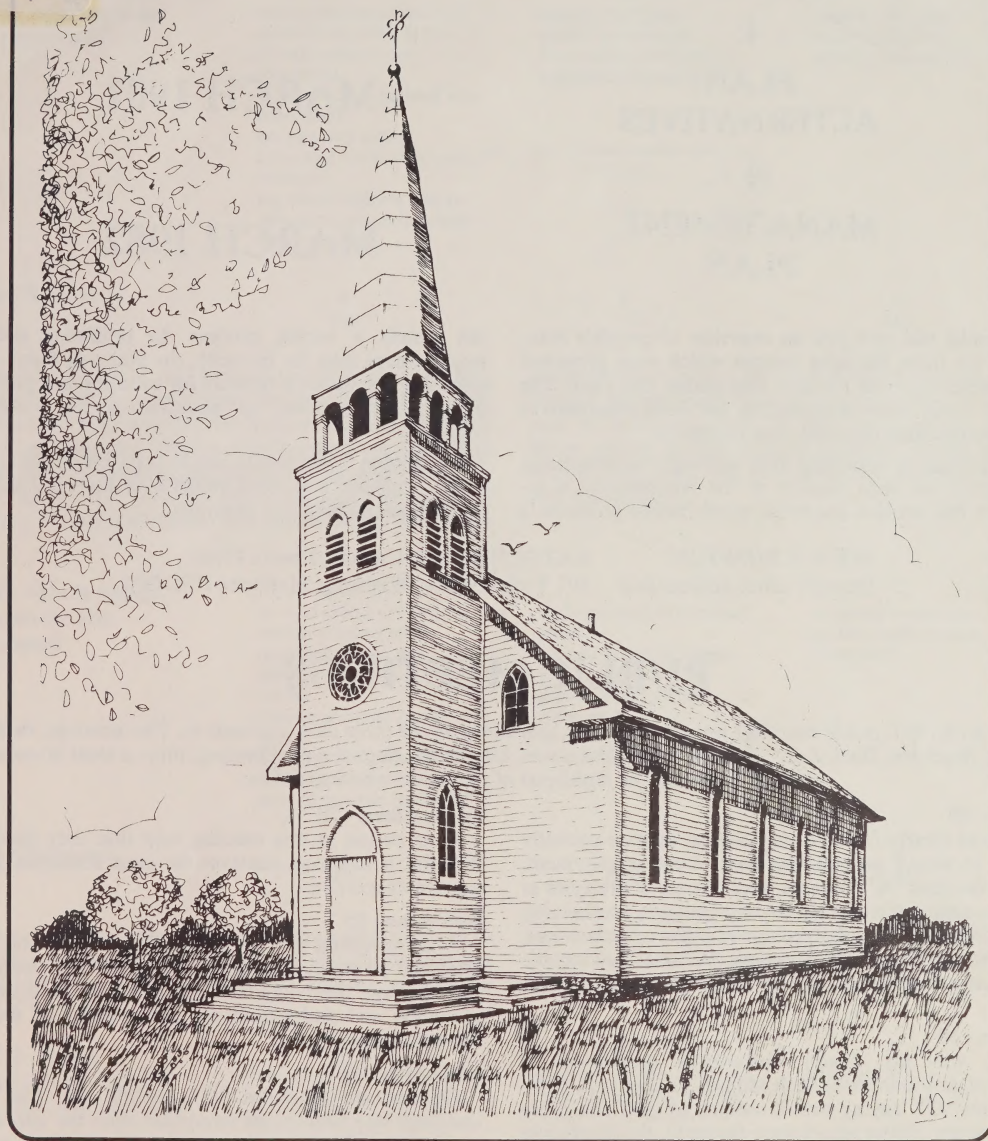


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BATOCHÉ NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Public Comment on the Plan Alternatives

THE PLANNING PROCESS

THEMES AND OBJECTIVES

- MARCH 1980



PLAN ALTERNATIVES

- MARCH 1981



MANAGEMENT PLAN

- MARCH 1982

This booklet will give you an overview of people's reactions to the three planning options which were proposed for Batoche National Historic Site earlier this year. The projects which were presented in the Plan Alternatives have been repeated here, for your reference.

It is important to remember that although the frequency of response for each section of the Alternatives is indicated in this booklet, the public participation program is

not simply a voting process. In preparing the final management plan for Batoche, the planning team will be assessing the public's reasons for selecting one particular option over another, in addition to the volume of response.

The Planning Team would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed their time and expertise to the Batoche planning program.

WE'VE MOVED!

Our new office address is:

BATOCHÉ Parks Canada, Fourth Floor

391 York Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0P4

PUBLIC MEETINGS

In March 1981, public meetings were held to hear your ideas on the three plan alternatives. The meetings, held in Batoche, Rosthern, Duck Lake, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Regina and Winnipeg, drew a total attendance of 336 people. The highlights of the public meetings follow:

Batoche - 69

"C" was clearly favoured in Batoche, at least partially because it would provide the most local employment. Those who liked "A" feared a total change of lifestyles at Batoche, and preferred to see no changes at the site. Others disagreed with the provincial highway relocation. One person preferred "B" because "C" was too expensive. Other issues raised were the ferry, and access for the elderly.

Rosthern - 20

There was no clearly discernible indication of preference at the meeting in Rosthern. One person commented on "C", saying that it seemed to give you more for the money. Other issues were the ferry, the Northcote and access for the elderly and handicapped.

Duck Lake - 44

Again, in Duck Lake there was no clear indication of preference. "C" was the only alternative to receive specific comments (2). The village buildings were said to be necessary, but it was pointed out that "C" would have to be phased in gradually to avoid a sudden influx of tourists to the area. Other issues included the ferry, the Northcote and access for the elderly.

Prince Albert - 20

Four people at this meeting said that they liked "C". Batoche, it was said, deserves the most elaborate and expensive alternative.

Saskatoon - 85

A combination of "B" and "C" was mentioned most often in Saskatoon (3). Two people stated a preference for "C", feeling that tangible evidence was necessary for education and understanding. The question of the ferry was also raised.

Edmonton - 28

One person favoured "C", feeling that the village buildings had been more important than the church and rectory. Again, access for the elderly, the ferry and the Northcote were discussed.

Regina - 20

"C" was the obvious choice in Regina (7). The main reason seemed to be a comparison with federal expenditures at other sites such as Louisbourg.

Winnipeg - 52

"C" was the only alternative mentioned at this meeting (4).

WRITTEN RESPONSES

Since March, the planning team has received 76 written submissions concerning the future of Batoche. An outline of the general trends seen in the questionnaires follows:

I. What would be relocated or removed?

- A**
- rectory displays (removed)
 - modern structures in the church-rectory area (removed)
 - church-rectory parking area (relocated)
 - introductory exhibit (relocated or rebuilt at park entrance)
 - provincial highway (minor relocation to accommodate visitor centre)

- B**
- same as "A", plus
 - provincial highway relocated east of zareba (Middleton's trenches)

- C**
- same as "B", plus
 - minor realignment, cemetery access road

Written Response

A
18%

B
51%

C
31%

In the responses to this section, we were reminded that park developments must respect the historic environment, and that removing non-historic features restores historical credibility to the site. On the other hand, some people felt that the rectory displays and modern structures should remain. The relocation of the provincial highway was seen by many as being necessary for visitor safety and visual

integrity, while others felt that it was too costly and not needed. A few people suggested that a pedestrian underpass or overpass could be used to cross the highway. Some people thought that the highway should be moved even further east. We were told that the new viewpoint was a good idea.

II. What would remain the same?

- A**
- no road access to village
 - cemetery access road
 - no access to west side
 - parking lot at introductory exhibit
 - grazing contracts (west side)
 - haying contracts (east side)
 - west side landscape and most of east side landscape

- B**
- highway north of relocated portion
 - no road access to village
 - cemetery access road
 - grazing south portion (west side)
 - no access to west side

- C**
- no access to west side
 - grazing south portion (west side)

Written Response

A
30%

B
44%

C
26%

Once again, we were cautioned to keep unnatural intrusions to a minimum. Access to the west side by ferry or bridge was emphasized by many respondents, as was the

protection and development of west side resources. Road access to the village was both supported and opposed. There were also varying opinions about grazing, while haying was thought to keep the area clear.

III. What would be new?

I. VISITOR CENTRE

- A**
- located west of highway, close to church and rectory
 - it would include: orientation area, exhibits, small theatre, site model and "typical Métis structure" of the historic period, office, washrooms, equipment and storage room, cafeteria, outdoor eating area, administration function

- B**
- same as "A", but with a less extensive interpretive component because there will be more development of the historic resources and more on-site interpretation

- C**
- same as "B"

Written Response

A
28%

B
53%

C
19%

Written Response (continued)

Some people wanted the visitor centre to be located closer to the church and rectory, while others felt that it should be kept at the extreme limits of the park. It was pointed out that modern media should not dominate over the on-site interpretation of historic resources. On the other hand, it was also suggested that on-site interpretation should not jeopardize interpretation in the visitor centre, since this provides a good introduction. Respondents emphasized that the building itself should be simple and inconspicuous, looking like one of the period struc-

tures. Examples of exhibits at sites such as Halifax Citadel, Canadian War Museum, Little Bighorn and Chrysler Farm were seen to be appropriate for Batoche. Picnic areas and modern washrooms were said to be important, but we were also cautioned to keep visitor comfort to a minimum so that areas outside the park would benefit from increased use. Individual and community craft displays and sales were suggested as was an auditorium or theatre for films and presentations.

2. MAINTENANCE COMPOUND

A

- same location as visitor centre
- maintenance compound would contain garage, workshop, lunch area, locker room and washroom, equipment and materials storage

B

- same as "A".

C

- same location as "B", but larger facility because of additional staff requirements and maintenance workload.

Written Response

A

37%

B

30%

C

33%

It was suggested that the maintenance compound should be physically separated from the visitor centre to eliminate a possible noise and safety hazard. We were also cautioned to select a site which would not intrude on the historic environment. Some people felt that a larger

staff, and therefore a larger facility would be necessary. Others suggested that the facility should be large enough to be comfortable but not extravagant, and that it should be planned so that expansion would be possible at a later date.

3. ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

A

- parking areas at visitor centre and maintenance compound, entrance to Carlton Trail and orientation exhibit
- period trail to village
- contemporary trail along battle front
- no car access to church/rectory or village
- access roads to visitor centre, maintenance compound and Métis land

B

- as in "A", plus
- provincial highway relocation
- no car access to Middleton's trenches
- the possibility of public transit will be examined depending on visitor demand and operational experience

C

- as in "B", plus
- access road to parking area on plateau, below and behind village (replaces parking area at entrance to Carlton Trail)

Written Response

A

18%

B

49%

C

33%

A variety of views were expressed about public transit. Several people were of the opinion that a decision on public transit should wait to see if visitation warrants it. Some people were completely opposed to public transit, believing it to be inefficient and expensive. Others felt that it should be provided immediately, at least for the elderly and handicapped. Many people cautioned that public transit should be unobtrusive, and suggested using horses and carts on historic routes. Access within the park, particularly for the elderly and handicapped, was a major concern, with many participants stating that the required walking distances were too great. Some people suggested that road access to the attractions as well as trails should

be available. Others felt that there should be no additional roads, since trails are in keeping with the historic atmosphere. A circular route for pedestrian traffic was proposed. Many people felt that road access to the village should be a priority, and a few felt that its proposed route was too round-about. It was suggested that screened roads could follow the military and Carlton trails. Parking lots were also discussed by many participants. Screened parking lots close to the major attractions were proposed, as was parking all cars at the entrance to reduce noise and dust. Providing direct access to Métis lands was seen as a good idea.

4. STRUCTURAL PRESERVATION

A

- stabilize Caron residence
- preserve village resources (including Champagne farmstead)
- preserve structural remnants (west side) and protect selected rifle pits

B

- where possible, stabilize heritage structures throughout the park
- where feasible, stabilize structural remains of the village
- protect many of the archaeological resources (west side)
- west village and selected rifle pits screened off from cattle

C

- physical remnants (west side) will be protected and screened off from cattle

Written Response

A

12%

B

38%

C

48%

We were told that structural preservation should be as extensive as the resources will allow. Many respondents felt that protecting and preserving the historic fabric is an essential, low cost item which must be done now before the potential is lost. We were reminded that people visit historic sites to see heritage structures not interpretive centres, and it was suggested that stabilizing existing

resources should take priority over interpretation. It was also suggested that the rifle pits and all archaeological resources should be protected and screened off. Some people felt that since there is no access to the west side, we should concentrate our efforts on the east side.

5. STRUCTURAL RESTORATION

A

- full restoration and furnishing of the church
- restore and furnish lower level of the rectory
- restore cemetery grave markers, in cooperation with the Parish of Batoche

B

- as in "A", but both floors of the rectory, plus
- restore Caron residence, remove rear annex and refurbish interior

C

- as in "B", plus acquisition and external restoration of Jean Caron Jr.'s farmstead building

Written Response

A

15%

B

36%

C

49%

Authentic structural restorations were said to be necessary for an understanding of the community. Many people liked the plans for improving and maintaining the cemetery, and suggested restoring the fence around the mass grave. The church and rectory were said to be the first priority. It was suggested that when the church is restored, part of the interior wall should be left unfinished

to illustrate the construction method. One person felt that the upper floor of the rectory should be restored after the Caron building, while a few others thought that the restorations of the Caron and Caron Jr. buildings were not immediately necessary. It was proposed that several Métis homes and business establishments be restored, but we were cautioned to avoid a "typical Métis settlement".

6. PERIOD RECONSTRUCTION

A

- not in this option

B

- 1897 rectory annex reconstructed to provide for a necessary fire exit

C

- as in "B", plus
- important structures in the village (not necessarily all will be furnished)
 - a) Letendre's house
 - b) Letendre's store
 - c) Fisher's store
 - d) Boyer's store
- missing flanks of zareba and rifle pits constructed during the battle

Written Response

A

12%

B

18%

C

70%

Written Response (continued)

A great many respondents said that reconstructions are necessary because people, especially children, need tangible evidence to be able to understand the different lifestyle of the time. Some people felt that while authenticity is important, reconstructions do not need to be exact replicas. It was suggested by some that Batoche should be the west's Louisbourg, while others felt that any decision on major reconstructions should wait to see if visitation warrants it. One person thought that reconstruction would destroy the historic resources. Another believed that there is not enough information available for reconstructions, and that alternatives should be examined, such as using steel girders to outline buildings. Many people said that "C" is the minimum, and that reconstructing the village is important to interpret the history if Batoche is not to be just a battle site.

It was suggested that since Letendre and Dumont were the major figures, their homes should be reconstructed as well as Caron's. One person felt that Letendre's store should have priority, while another thought that Boyer's store was sufficient. It was suggested that the church and rectory were not as important as the village. Many people felt that reconstructing the rectory annex was necessary, but one person believed that a fire exit would be possible without the annex. Another person suggested that a safety compromise was the best solution. Several people stated that reconstructing the zareba flanks and rifle pits would enable a better understanding of the battle, but others felt that a representative sample would be sufficient. The Pilon House was proposed for acquisition, and it was suggested that the barn behind the rectory and the first Batoche school should also be reconstructed.

7. LANDSCAPE RESTORATION

A

- church-rectory-cemetery area
- Carlton Trail from parking area to village

B

- satellite exhibit area
- vegetation between zareba and church
- screening of visitor centre and access roads
- church-rectory-cemetery area
- selected landscape features along a trail from zareba to church and village
- rifle pits (west side) and vegetation pattern (partial)
- Carlton Trail, village area (partial) and fencelines and cultivation around Batoche's house
- ferry crossing area (east side)

C

- as in "B", plus
- general landscape of village
- zareba, Caron Farmstead, and entire battlefield

Written Response

A

11%

B

43%

C

45%

Comments on landscape restoration ranged from a desire to keep the grounds as they are now to restoring the entire site. Some people felt that the vegetation conditions in 1885 could only be recreated for a short period of time and would be difficult to maintain. Another person thought that the trees would spread out and fill the entire area. The immediate removal of exotic species was suggested. One person stated that if man's activities (e.g. cultivation, grazing) are stopped, then the native vegetation would re-establish itself. We were cautioned not to disturb the historic environment, and it was emphasized that areas for visitors should look like they did in 1885. Screening out modern facilities and activities, and removing evidence of the current highway were proposed. A few people suggested returning part of the park to a natural

prairie habitat, with prairie dogs and bison on the west side. One person stated that since the west side is to be inaccessible, the landscape should not be restored. We were cautioned not to restore the landscape without restoring the associated buildings. The original survey mounds were suggested for restoration. The Carlton trail was discussed and some people felt that restoring the trail east of the highway was unnecessary while others wanted it restored on both sides of the river. A few people suggested restoring the entire battlefield. Others believed that the zareba needed only a partial restoration, and that the rifle pits could be explained by means of markers and signage. Concentrating efforts on the village, church, cemetery and zareba areas was also suggested.

8. INTERPRETATION

A

- new orientation exhibit at park entrance
- ground interpretation of zareba, village, ferry crossing and Champagne farmstead
- exhibit, audio-visual program and model in visitor centre
- publications and pamphlets
- information and/or guided tours in church-rectory area and visitor centre
- period furnishing of church and rectory (lower level)

B

- as in "A", plus
- period furnishing of Caron homestead and second floor of rectory
- ground interpretation of scenic lookout area and military trail to village
- publications and pamphlets at church-rectory area, Middleton's trenches, north parking area (and public transit vehicles if system is implemented)
- special fetes and pageants (volunteer groups)
- Red River cart rides on Carlton Trail (occasionally)
- when feasible, period services in the church
- staff in period costume at Caron residence and church/rectory

C

- as in "B", plus
- ground interpretation of Caron Jr. farmstead
- information and/or guided tours at zareba-Caron Jr. area and village
- special festivals and plays
- play acting roles by staff
- period furnishing of some additional reconstructed buildings, and Middleton's trenches interpreted by staff and volunteers in period costume

Written Response

A

13%

Many people suggested reconstructing the ferry and ferry crossing, stating that these are becoming rare in Saskatchewan. Some participants felt that ferry rides would be worthwhile even if the west side isn't developed. Reconstruction of the Northcote was also emphasized. Pamphlets, maps and models were suggested to interpret the battle as well as settlement patterns. On the other hand, one respondent warned that too many pamphlets are wasteful, since most people simply discard them. Sales of books, post cards and stamps were also proposed. Several people suggested erecting a plaque or cairn which would indicate the Métis and soldiers killed in action, and others wanted an annual re-enactment of the battle. One person suggested correcting the "Gunner Phillips Grave" marker. Proposals were received both for and against having statue monuments of the main figures. Staff in period costumes, play acting roles, special fêtes and pageants were also both supported and opposed. Some people requested the return of the original Gatling gun and church bell. A permanent display of an archaeological dig as well as a display of artifacts were proposed. Arguments were presented on both sides of having Red River Cart rides and other horse-drawn transportation. The importance of the river for transportation and its influence on Métis lifestyle was pointed out. It was suggested that one of the historic buildings could be used as a theatre for local people and native playwrights, and that there could be an open air amphitheatre for summer use. Several people suggested movies and multi-media productions, while a few others felt that they were out of place. Guided tours and on-site interpretation were stressed and many participants recommended using local Métis people for interpretation. Equal representation of the lifestyle and rebellion themes was seen as important. Details on participants in the Rebellion aside from Riel, and geneological trees of Métis families were suggested. The involvement of the Beardy and One Arrow people, the link between Batoche and Manitoba, the influence of the church, and the political atmosphere of the time were all emphasized. We were cautioned not to overlook

B

43%

human resources, and to record the oral history of Batoche. The relationship between Batoche and other sites such as Fish Creek, Gabriel's Crossing, Duck Lake and Prince Albert was pointed out. It was suggested that educational kits should be available to school children prior to a visit. Interpretation of subjects such as the first school, the seigneurial system, the natural environment and the present conditions of Métis in Saskatchewan were all proposed. Some people suggested year-round use of facilities. Period furnishings were thought to be memorable and educational. Many people wanted to be able to feel what participants in the battle experienced, while a few felt that too much emphasis was being placed on military aspects. Ground interpretation of the village and Caron Jr. homestead in conjunction with pamphlets was proposed as a useful technique.

C

45%

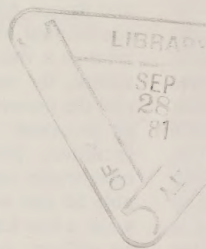
Other Comments

Of the 76 written responses we received; 9% favoured Alternative "A" overall, 40% liked Alternative "B", and 51% liked Alternative "C".

Many people told us that Batoche is the most valuable site in Saskatchewan, a memorial to the Métis people and very important to all western Canadians. They felt that Batoche should be Parks Canada's first priority. One respondent felt that all of the options were too elaborate, and that the interest and visitation did not warrant the expense. Once again, we were reminded not to tamper with the "openness" and beauty of the area, nor to allow Batoche to become commercialized. Development, it was said, should focus on historical features rather than modern facilities. Regional impact of developments, and the integration of Batoche with other sites in the area were again stressed, as was local employment.

1985 Centennial

Discussions about the upcoming centennial of the Northwest Rebellion brought a mixed reaction from the public. While many people felt that it is important to complete development by 1985 so that the momentum is not lost, an equal number stressed that 1985 is not a magic date and should not be a factor in selecting the plan.



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